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## Deputy shoots, kills dog blamed for attacks

By Paul Wellersdick Staff Writer

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Butte County Deputy Sheriffs shot and killed a German shepherd after five reports were fielded about dogs killing pets near the Paradise Pines Property Owners Association.

Sgt Mike Lydon said animal control was not available Sunday and Sgt. Tom Coleman responded finding two dogs killing cats and acting aggressively.

"The dog turned and approached him in an aggressive manner," Lydon said. "At that point he shot."

Sheriffs do have other options in animal control including tasers and pepper spray, Lydon said.

"Those are options, but sometimes you go for what you know will work," he said.

Officers don't like shooting animals or dealing with the consequences, but occasionally it becomes necessary, Lydon said.

"Sometimes you have to do what you have to do," he said. "It came at him aggressively and it already killed other animals and he did what he had to do."

Lydon has seen what a large dog can do to a person after running four different dogs in law enforcement K9 units.

"I've seen what any dog can do," he said. "Different breeds friendly neighborhood black labs."

Though Lydon wasn't there, he knew the deputy who shot and injured the dog initially Sunday used less lethal methods in dealing with dogs in the past. A second deputy responded and found the dog critically injured and the dog was later put down by a second shot, Lydon said.

Part of the job description includes killing injured deer after traffic collisions, Lydon said.

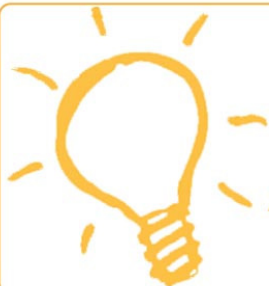
"A lot of times we have to shoot deer," he said. "You can tell when something is not going to make it."

A neighbor in the area on Sunday was advised not to shoot the dog which he said attacked him, the Sheriff's public log stated. Lydon confirmed the log's statement saying that a 75-year-old man was armed with a 12 gauge on his porch waiting for the dog. Sandra Cannon owned Casper the 8-year-old German shepherd that was shot.

"He was extremely loyal, he just didn't like cats," she said.

Cannon had two German shepherds. Both have escaped from their enclosed yard from time to time, but always without incident, she said.

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"Casper, he's a 'Houdini,'" she said. "He used to climb a tree to get out."

Cannon built a seven-foot tall enclosure to keep the escape artist in the yard, but Casper still managed to get out, she said. Cannon maintained that her dogs were nice and loyal.

"I think (the deputy) jumped the gun and shot him," Cannon said. "What can I do. My dogs happened to get out. I know it was my responsibility to keep them in. So ultimately it's my fault."

Casper had never hurt a person, she said.

"All I know is my dog has never done that," she said. "It doesn't matter. He's dead. Eight years - he's been here all his life. He didn't bite anybody."

Debbie and Ed Radke live in the neighborhood where the dog attacks were reported. Debbie said she watched two German shepherds attack her neighbor.

"I was sitting here and I heard the (neighbors') girls screaming," she said. "Their dog, Homer, was running down the driveway with that big dog in hot pursuit."

This wasn't the first time they had seen the shepherds in the neighborhood acting aggressively, Debbie said.

"There were two German shepherds in our yard and they were very aggressive and they were

scary," she said. "Ed chased them off. It was the same dog that I saw two weeks ago. It was after Homer."

After the dog attacked her neighbors, it took off running through the greenbelt, Debbie said.

"It was scary," she said. "They're not ones we like running through the neighborhood."

Ed said over the past four weeks the dogs have periodically come through his yard. On Sunday he followed them in his car and warned neighborhood children to be careful, he said.

"You know, it's like this a lot of time," Ed said. "These dogs are off leash and it's quite a problem because there are kids up here."

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